

CROWDERS MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

PARK PROFILE

PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Crowders Mountain State Park was established in 1973 as a result of a grassroots citizens' effort to protect the area from possible strip mining. The park is a source of pride for local citizens, who remain interested in the park's significant geological, scenic and biological resources.

Representative examples of significant geological resources in the park include an exemplary quartzite hogback; unusually large bladed crystals of kyanite, an aluminum silicate imbedded in the quartzite; and an excellent example of Draytonville conglomerate, a coarse quartz pebble conglomerate with rounded pebbles that commonly reach an inch or two in diameter.

The significant scenic resources of the park include the contrast between rolling Piedmont hills and the sheer rock outcrops of the Kings Mountain Range. Numerous opportunities exist to view the panoramic Piedmont plateau from the park's cliffs, a scenic experience that cannot be found elsewhere in this rapidly urbanizing region. The two peaks protected by the park, Crowders Mountain and King's Pinnacle, rise approximately 800 feet above the plateau, offering impressive natural scenery to the large local population and travelers on Interstate 85.

Among the park's significant biological values are three exemplary plant communities and several rare plant species. The natural communities include Low Elevation Rocky Summit, which is rare in the Piedmont, Piedmont Monadnock Forest and Pine-Oak Heath. Rare plants present in the park include Bradley's spleenwort (Asplenium bradleyi), ground juniper (Juniperus communis var. depressa), Appalachian golden-banner (Thermopsis mollis var. mollis), Biltmore carrion-flower (Smilax biltmoreana), mountain witch alder (Fothergilla major) and smooth sunflower (Helianthus laevigatus). A special species of reptiles, the pigmy rattlesnake (Sistrurus miliarius) also inhabits the park and vultures have been noted nesting on the cliffs. Crowders Mountain State Park is characterized by a significant amount of biological diversity and a transition of microenvironments from the Piedmont plateau to the two summits within the park.

Crowders Mountain serves as a significant resource for the study of natural history and environmental education. Given the large regional population, an outstanding opportunity for day-use interpretive programs exists. Primary interpretive themes for the park center upon its geological and biological values.

The park offers a contrast to local and regional facility-oriented recreation. Recreational opportunities at Crowders Mountain focus upon interpretive activities in a natural environment. These opportunities are compatible with one another and with the park's natural history emphasis. Camping is provided in order to encourage people to enjoy and learn about the park.

Crowders Mountain State Park offers a contrast to the rapidly developing local area by maintaining boundaries that adequately protect the park's resources and by providing high quality outdoor recreation experiences. Visitors to the park feel they are in a setting predominated by the forces of nature. Park boundaries are designed to provide resource protection and access control, and to protect the scenic and biological integrity of the land.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The Kyanite-Quartzite Monadnocks of Crowders Mountain and King's Pinnacle: These monadnocks, the highest two peaks of the Kings Mountain range, are the outstanding geological features of the park. These peaks have many exposed rock outcrops and vertical cliffs as well as diversity of rock types. The park came into existence due to public support to save these monadnocks from the fate of Henry's Knob, which was mined down from a peak to an open pit. The formation and erosion of the Kings Mountain range and the role of the park in protecting these unique monadnocks are the focus of this theme.

Stream and Lake Ecology: This theme focuses on the diversity of plant and animal life found in and around the water. It also concerns the area's water quality and health of the ecosystem.

Diverse Plant Communities: At the various elevations and slopes along Crowders Mountain a diverse array of plant communities are found. The plant communities are related to the soils, rocks and exposures. The importance of the park in protecting these communities is also a part of this theme.

STATISTICS

Visitation (1999)	311,091
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 337,774
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 9,544

VISITOR FACILITIES

Primitive camping (10 sites)	Primitive group camping (6 sites)
Drinking water	Lake fishing
Canoe rental	Rock climbing
Picnic area (28 tables, 2 shelters)	10 Hiking trails (11.9 miles total)
Park office/visitor center	

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

1	The building demolition and repairs project includes demolition of 2 buildings and repairs in accordance with the FIIP assessment to 5 buildings.	\$ 44,041
2	The Pinnacle Turnback trail project involves major renovation to the trail in order to refurbish the tread and alleviate resource degradation.	192,890
3	The Crowders Rock Top trail project involves major renovation to the trail in order to refurbish the tread and alleviate resource degradation.	163,701
4	The picnic area expansion project extends the picnic area roadway, adds parking spaces and picnic units, extends water and electric lines, and constructs 2 picnic shelters, a toilet building, and a septic system.	887,608
5	The ranger residences project will demolish 1 sub-standard residence and construct 2 new standard residences.	391,749

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| 6 | The lake, campground, road and bridge project (land dependent) removes an old dam and constructs a new one to double the lake size, clears and grades 25 acres, constructs a 30-site campground with parking, washhouse, utilities, and site amenities, and constructs a pier and boathouse. | 2,575,058 |
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TOTAL:	\$4,255,047
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DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE

Crowders Mountain Dedicated Nature Preserve: This area encompasses approximately 670 acres and includes Little Mountain. Many geologists consider Crowders Mountain to be the best example of a quartzite hogback in the state. Crowders Mountain is a sharp-crested ridge formed by the outcropping edges of steeply inclined resistant rocks. The dedicated preserve contains good examples of the three natural communities and several of the rare species mentioned above.

King's Pinnacle Dedicated Nature Preserve: Approximately 545 acres of this peak and the ridges are included in the preserve. Significant populations of many of the special plants and good examples of many of the community plants are present on King's Pinnacle.

FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Crowders Mountain State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 3,080 acres. Land acquisition priorities include: the completion of the natural areas surrounding the two primary features of the park, Crowders Mountain and King's Pinnacle; acquiring the necessary land base for development of facilities in the Crowders Unit, King's Mountain Unit, Valley Unit and Central Activity Area; visual protection of Yellow Ridge; a connector corridor to King's Mountain Military Park; and the removal of access inholdings.

Master Plan Total Acreage	6,114 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>3,034 acres</u>
Acquisition Needs	3,080 acres

2000 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
Park Superintendent I	1	Park Attendant	3	Park Attendant	1
Park Ranger II	3	General Utility Worker	1	Office Assistant II	1
Park Ranger I	2	Office Assistant II	1		
Maintenance Mechanic I	1				
Maintenance Mechanic II	1				
General Utility Worker	1				
Office Assistant III	2				

PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent	Seasonal	Peak Load